

(b) if so, whether incapability, inefficiency, low output and low profitability have to be removed from the public sector units; and

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) One of the main aims and objectives of the New Industrial Policy, 1991 (NIP) and reforms in various sectors, is to make the Indian Industry internationally competitive;

(b) and (c) To remain viable, PSU also need to become internationally competitive. With this end in view, reforms have been introduced in the public sector units for removal of incapability, inefficiency, low output and low profitability.

Government have identified Navratna Enterprises, which have the potential to become major players in the world market and have granted them managerial, financial and operational autonomy to enable them to take commercial decisions and become competitive in the domestic and international markets. Similarly, a few other profit-making enterprises have been categorised as 'Miniratnas' to enable them to exercise autonomy subject to fulfilling certain stipulated conditions. In addition to this, on a general basis, the public sector units have been granted higher delegation of financial powers.

The main elements of Government's policy towards the public sector are restructure and revive potentially viable PSUs, close down PSUs which cannot be revived, bring down Government equity in all non-strategic PSUs to 26% or lower if necessary, and fully protect the interests of workers.

Agreement Signed with WTO

2961. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether some agreements signed with WTO has affected marketing of domestic agricultural products of the country; and

(b) If so, the details thereof with names of products affected and the steps to be taken to ensure that marketing of domestic agricultural products of the country are not affected at all?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) India is a signatory to WTO Agreement on Agriculture and General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. The Agreement on Agriculture

seeks to convert all non-tariff barriers such as, Quantitative Restrictions (QRS), into tariffs. Imports are to be regulated only through tariffs. However, countries are free to apply tariffs within the bound level. In the case of India tariffs for primary agricultural products, processed agricultural products and edible oils have been found at 100%, 150% and 300% respectively except for a few items which had been found at lower levels in the earlier negotiations. Bound level of duties of some of these items where the earlier bound level of duties was considered inadequate, were got raised under Article XXVIII negotiations by giving concession in some other items, to provide the necessary protection to the farmers and the domestic industry. None of the WTO Agreements has put any restrictions on the marketing of domestic agricultural products.

Consequent to a ruling of the Dispute Settlement Body of the WTO, which held that India was no longer justified in maintaining QRs on balance of payment grounds, India is in the process of phasing out QRs on imports which it was maintaining earlier under the Balance of Payments considerations and the balance of QRs are to be removed by 1.4.2001. However, the import of agricultural items is being suitably regulated by imposing appropriate tariffs within the bound tariffs so as to provide adequate protection to the farmers and domestic industry.

Various items exported from Maharashtra

†2962. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agro-products, mineral products, forestry products, industrial products, textile products, and other products exported from Maharashtra during the last five years; year-wise and item-wise; and

(b) the steps being taken to encourage the export from Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The Central Government maintains the export data for the country as a whole and not State-wise.

(b) Central Government evolves plans and formulates its export policy to promote export of various items and products from all State/Union Territories of India including Maharashtra. Under Critical Infrastructure Balance Scheme three projects namely-Strengthening of Urban Panvel State Highway, Setting up of Regional Trade Centre, Pune & Computerisation of Santa Cruz EPZ have been sanctioned for Maharashtra at a total cost of Rs. 6.2675 crores.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.